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ABSTRACT

To examine factors which influenced the media's agenda-building process during a primary election period in Mississippi, a study explored candidates' personal attributes, campaign resourcefulness, and media connectedness as important agenda-building variables. Candidates for Mississippi's United States House of Representatives seats in 1982 and 1986 were surveyed, resulting in 17 completed interviews. The 7 candidates out of 24 who chose not to participate in the survey were resource-poor candidates who did not wage aggressive, rigorous campaigns. The survey was part of a project examining politicians' and journalists' perceptions of election agenda building. Results showed that the media paid more attention to candidates on the basis of their campaigns' financial advantage, level of resourcefulness, and personal attributes (race and gender), and thus that resource-rich candidates may dominate the agenda-building process in news coverage. On the basis of the patterns seen in the Mississippi campaigns, findings suggest that resource-poor candidates are, in fact, sophisticated and prudent about their use of news media; however, resource-poor candidates perceive news organizations to be unresponsive no matter how aggressively they pursue media coverage. (Three tables of data and 37 notes are included.) (SR)

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# MEDIA AGENDA-BUILDING AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

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## ABSTRACT

Many resource-poor political candidates rely on publicity gained from news coverage during the primary period for name recognition and visibility. Few attempts have been made to examine factors, other than financial factors, which influence the agenda-building process during the primary election period. This study explores personal attributes, campaign resourcefulness and media connectedness as important agenda-building variables. Candidates for Mississippi's U.S. House of Representatives seats in 1982 and 1986 were surveyed. The findings suggest that media do pay more attention to candidates on the basis of their campaigns' financial advantage, level of resourcefulness and personal attributes.

Politicians spend an enormous amount of time generating press releases, primping for photo sessions and courting reporters-all to draw the attention of journalists. Most politicians need the microphones, the cameras and the news print to reach voters.

Larry Sabato envisions that new campaign technology and the rise of the political consultant will produce a "whole new generation of officeholders far more skilled in the art of running for office than in the art of governing."[1] Steven Pressman says that in some cases, the business of running for office never ends.[2]

Mass communication researchers are building a compelling body of literature suggesting that news coverage emphasizes the horse race and stylistic characteristics of political campaigns at the expense of issue-oriented aspects of political races.[3] Consequently, candidates plan their campaign events with these news values in mind. This kind of news coverage may impair voters' ability to make informed decisions about candidates' capabilities and issue stances.

Some scholars contend that media should not share the leadership role with political parties in selecting candidates for voters' consideration.[4] Conversely, Weaver, Graber, McCombs and Eyal suggest because voters now rely heavily on the media for political decision-making, the media should maximize their efforts to cover candidates as equally as possible.[5]

Weaver et al. argue that media may determine which candidate is shown in the best light and is hence elected.[6]

This influence is particularly critical for candidates who cannot command the resources to mount expensive advertising campaigns.[7] Resource-poor campaigns depend heavily on news coverage for publicity. This study assumes that in the primary election period the consequences of the news selection process are decisive for candidates. Studies by Patterson and Weaver et al. have found that in the case of presidential elections the burden on the media is particularly severe in the early nomination phase of the election campaigning.[8] Weaver et al. have found that the "media are important in establishing an agenda of candidates early in the campaign."[9]

Weaver et al. suggest that guidance from the media is more essential for voters in the primary period than at any other time because party labels are not available to help voters in making choices.[10] Without media attention, some political careers are short circuited. Because resource-poor candidates cannot afford advertising blitzes, their voices may never be heard.

In previous studies, financial wealth is emphasized as one of the central determinants of the attention the media give to candidates and campaign effectiveness. This study argues that this perspective is one-sided and a potentially misleading view. Media pay attention to a number of campaign characteristics as they determine a candidate's newsworthiness. Joslyn considers election campaigns as newsworthy events in a number of ways: 1)

Campaigns recur at specific times, 2) Campaigns are dramatic, 3) Campaigns have measured outcomes, 4) Campaigns are confrontational.'' Other research concurs that these news values are shaped by organizational constraints which dictate the economic, legal and social consequences of presenting a news story.'[2]

This focus does not include other equally important campaign resourcefulness issues impacting the media's perception of political candidates, such as: the candidate's personal attributes, organizational strategy and the personal communication structures between politicians and journalists that facilitate an understanding of how politicians form and maintain media relations that maximize and shape campaign coverage.

To the extent that the mass media consider campaign resourcefulness in selecting front runners and serious contenders in the primary period, the notion of agenda raises two concerns: Does campaign resourcefulness affect the way politicians and journalists collaborate to build a media agenda? Do media give more attention to resource-rich campaigns than to resource-poor campaigns? If so, what accounts for such differences? This investigation will explore the relationships between politicians' personal attributes, campaign resourcefulness, and their perceptions of media connectedness.

## Agenda-Building

Gurevitch, Blumler and Weaver contend that " it was a

matter of time before the question... namely if the media set the agenda, who sets the agenda for the agenda-setters was to emerge." [13] As media and politicians interact to build an election agenda, they influence not only what we think about, but how we think.[14]

Cobb and Elder's agenda-building model provides the theoretical foundation for examining the way media and politicians interact to shape an election agenda. The authors posit four assumptions: 1) the influence and access to any system has inherent biases, 2) the range of issues and alternative decisions that will be considered by a polity is restricted, 3) the range and type of issues and alternatives considered will represent the interests of previously legitimized political forces and 4) the system's inertia makes it extremely difficult to change the prevailing bias that determines which issues and alternatives are viewed as legitimate concerns of the polity. [15]

The momentum of agenda-building research is gaining. The model advances research which examines the relationships between journalists and news sources. Oscar Gandy employs an agenda-building analysis in his study of media sources and their use of journalism. He finds that journalists benefit from the relationships they establish with sources best able to meet their needs and to this extent information subsidies convey disproportionate power to resource-rich sources.[16]

Leon Sigal contends this dynamic is unintentional on the media's part. Some editors and reporters follow procedures that

inadvertently benefit official sources of news.'[17] The candidates' ability to "create news" is helpful to news organizations. Candidates are known to make broadcasters' jobs easier by furnishing a sustained, subsidized flow of information and enter an exchange relationship where sources reduce the cost of news work to increase control over news content.

During the election season, researchers find third party presidential candidates are slighted or even ignored by the media. Minority presidential candidates add even another dimension to the problem.

Clarke and Evans cite organizational efficiency based on resources as a factor in the mobilization of bias against challengers. They find that the disadvantages that confront challengers are more acute than limited name recognition and inattention by the press. They claim that the only category in which challengers enjoy parity with incumbents is personal characteristics.'[18] On all levels of government, minority candidates' political strategies usually include transcending race as a campaign issue.'[19] Womens' campaign are also handicapped by factors related to their sex.[20]

In his work, A Horse of a Different Color, C. Anthony Broh cites television as a formidable obstacle for a black presidential candidate. In the case of Jesse Jackson, he claims "that reporters recognized that the United States was not ready to elect (or consider the possibility of) a black man as president, and their reports became a self-fulfilling prophecy

guaranteeing that the United States was not ready to elect a black man as president in 1984."[21]

Sheila Collins noted that prior to the 1984 presidential campaign, Jackson managed his press image very well. During the campaign she detected a turnabout in the campaign's press relations. Her impressions were that Jackson was playing "on a much larger stage whose lighting could be turned off at the whim of an editor or network president."[22]

Reports of agenda-building effects are found in other studies. Goldenberg and Traugott find that incumbents receive greater news coverage than challengers regardless of the challengers' resources.[23] Clarke and Evans have raised similar concerns. They contend that journalistic effort is strongly related to the coverage of all well-financed candidates.[24]

In government, the cumulative effects of resourcefulness, incumbency and access are evident. Seniority is a major factor in achieving congressional power. Hess claims the national news media focus on those Senators who seem to wield institutional power (committee chairpersons and presidential aspirants) at the expense of junior legislators and non-leaders.[25] But Weaver and Wilhoit find that those senators with the largest staffs and most activity get the most coverage.[26]

Edie Goldenberg studied four resource-poor groups in Massachusetts. She found that welfare mothers, senior citizens, low income tenants, and people deprived of fair treatment by the courts seeking to attract newspaper coverage were apt to be

ignored by newspaper people. The most publicity was given to participants possessing the resources to make and maintain contact with the press and to arrange their operations so that they complement the needs of the press.[27]

Drawing from the discussed literature, this study emphasizes the effects of the individual and societal determinants that may limit some candidates' access to the news media. This discussion is guided by the assumption that election agenda-building is an indirect process in which campaign resourcefulness and media relations play important roles.

Clarke and Evans[28]; Goldenberg and Traugott[29] claim that media pay the most attention to incumbent and resource-rich candidates in the quantity and quality of news coverage. This study sought to augment the findings of previous research by looking beyond money as the primary source of campaign resourcefulness.

The agenda-building model suggests that the mobilization of any media bias is perpetuated by a number of social and economic determinants. Personal attributes and media connectedness may affect the acquisition of campaign resources and media access. . This study is an exploratory effort designed to specify elements essential to an objective determination of the media's election agenda-building process. In contrast to a thesis which posits a direct communication linkage between candidates and the media, this research design is guided by the assumption that media participation in election agenda-building is an indirect

process.

The mass media's role in providing forums for political discussion is obviously critical to perpetuating democracy's vitality in a technological age. However, media often function to close off access to candidates or views, and the public's understanding of each candidate's platform is being diminished by a lack of exposure to these alternatives.

At stake is the citizenry's ability to make free and informed choices. The actual quality of democratic representation is also at stake, "assuming that the balance of social forces influencing, if not controlling, the content of the political agenda at any time is necessarily biased to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others."[30]

To overlook personal attributes and the level of media connectedness neglects the social and political factors that maintain inequities in the political system.

## Conceptual Definitions

The following variables will be used in this analysis: candidate personal attributes, campaign resourcefulness and media connectedness.

Campaign resourcefulness is defined as the structural factors that determine a candidate's ability to organize and conduct an election campaign. These resources are most often prerequisites for media attention and name recognition. The dimensions of campaign resourcefulness are defined as: organizational strategy

(campaigning philosophy and campaign organization), personal attributes and financial advantage. Campaigning philosophy is a candidate's perspective on campaign operations and image management. This strategy reflects a candidate's basic beliefs about how a campaign should be run. This philosophy dictates the candidate's general approach to the campaign. Campaigning Philosophy-stems from the following question: In your view, how important were the following factors in conducting your campaign? a)the development of personal contacts with the press by candidate and campaign staff, b) the amount of press coverage, c) campaign activities designed to generate media coverage, d) issue positions, e) personality of the candidate. Response: 3) very important, 2)fairly important and 1)not very important.

Campaign organization stems from the following questions: 1) Party recruitment-Were you recruited by the party to run for Congress? 1) yes 0) no. 2) Full time staff size-How many full-time workers did you have on staff? 3) Part-time staff size-How big was your part-time staff? 4) Polling-How many times did you poll the electorate during the first primary?

Personal attributes are antecedent factors. It is hypothesized that these factors determine which candidates are able to acquire access to the media's agenda and organizational resources. These attributes are defined as race and gender.

Financial Advantage. FEC reports of campaign contributions and expenditures for each candidate were used to measure financial advantage. Based on figures quoted by political

consultants, financially resourceful campaigns are considered to cost $100,000 or more. This amount is the projected minimum cost of purchasing the kinds of technical services and media advertising to run a competitive campaign over one year period.

Media connectedness is defined as a candidates' ability to maximize news coverage of their campaigns by cultivating sustained relationships with news organizations. Media connectedness was operationalized as: 1) How often did you initiate contact with news organizations? 4=more than once a week, 3=weekly, 2=only to announce a special event, 1=never. 2) How many conferences did you hold during the primary period? 3) How many news organizations would show up at press conferences? 4=most of the organizations you contacted, 3=some of the organizations you contacted, 2=a few of the organizations you contacted, 1=none of the news organizations you contacted. 4) How often do you think news coverage you received was based on materials such as press releases, public affairs productions that you provided for news organizations? 4=frequently, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely, 1=never. 5) How often do you think news coverage was based on information you did not provide the news organizations? 4=frequently, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely, 4=never. 6) Did your campaign strategy involve a plan to contact the press on a regular basis? 4=nearly every day, 3=at least once a week, 2=to announce campaign activities only, 1=never. 7) How often did the media visit or call your campaign organization on their own initiative? 4=consistently, 3=more than three times,

2=at least once or twice, 1=never.

The following hypotheses will be tested: **Hypothesis I. Personal attributes predict a candidate's access to organizational resources in the primary period.** Based on numerous studies, the social science community accepts the effects of race and gender on political opportunity and reward. Research finds that minority and financially-poor candidates fail to attract money early in their campaigns. The lack of resources can impede voter contact plans and hinder the growth of the campaigns' momentum through news media coverage. In the primary period, this disadvantage may affect press perception of the candidate as a serious contender.

**Hypothesis II. Media Connectedness can be predicted by a candidate's level of campaign resourcefulness.** Rogers and Kincaid suggest that media connectedness is associated with similarity in physical characteristics and social homophily. Studies by Paletz and Entmann[31], Weaver and Wilhoit[32], Cobb and Elder[33] and Shoemaker[34] indicate that structural determinants affect business arrangements and professional relationships. The United States Supreme Court acknowledged this bias in the decision, The Board of Directors of Rotary International vs. Rotary of Club of Duarte.[35]

The idea of who is linked to whom is a determinant of election agenda-building. An examination of personal communication structures between politicians and journalists facilitates an understanding of how politicians form and maintain

media relations that maximize and shape campaign coverage.

## Methodology

The data for this study stem from a multi-method design data base. This survey was part of a project examining politicians and journalists perceptions of election agenda-building during the 1982 and 1986 U. S. House of Representatives primary election races in Mississippi. The primary period is a time when politics is in a more prominent position than usual on the voters' agenda. In every general election studied in Mississippi, voter turnout has declined from the level recorded in the previous primary election. Even though a general election offers an obvious choice among candidates, the drop in turnout may be related to a decline in citizen interest when the favorite son/daughter candidates from their district counties are eliminated from the contest.

Since media are an important source of information, one of the key agenda-setting roles in congressional campaigns is to make congressional candidate images salient. Research emphasis on the general election period overlooks the importance of contextual factors influencing the surfacing of some candidates and not others during the primary period. This void calls for an investigation of those factors that systematically influence the agenda-building processes of the media.

Some features of Mississippi politics provide a basis of comparison with other areas. Mississippi is the quintessential

deep southern state. Historically Mississippi's social structure of racial dualism was interrelated with the agricultural economy that depended on cheap labor. The nature of this system was rural and static Mississippi has the lowest per capita income in the nation. One out of every five families in the state live below the officially proclaimed poverty line.

Mississippi has the largest black population percentage of any state, almost 40% of the total population. Blacks constitute ta majority in 29 of the 82 counties in the state. Yet the number of black elected public officials remains low. However, racial and gender minority candidates add a new dimension to the drama of Souther politics. Their participation in the electoral process has caused higher levels of election uncertainty in the South.

In Mississippi, this uncertainty caused expenditures to sky rocket and a few candidates greatly escalated the funding contest. Each congressional incumbent in Mississippi increased his campaign expenditures by $100,000 from 1982 to 1984. The most extravagant efforts were made by the nation's oldest senator, John Stennis. Stennis was reelected in 1982. Stennis spent nearly one million dollars to defeat Republican Haley Barbour.

In 1982, Mississippi's second congressional district race proved to be one of the closest congresional races in the country. The Democratic candidate and favorite to win was Robert Clark. Clark is the first black person since reconstruction to

win a Mississippi Democratic congressional primary. The Republic opponent was Webb Franklin . Franklin scored an upset and won by 2,914 votes. Three years later, the FEderal Election Commission announced that Franklin's campaign committee had broken laws by accepting more than $60,000 in election campaign contributions. The money gave the campaign the competitive edge. At a time when campaign bank books were usually down to the last dime, Franklin had money for a last minute-media blitz and also money for transportation, a key element for turning out black voters. In 1986, Michael Espy became the first black member of the U. S. House of Representatives in the state of Mississippi since reconstruction.

These campaigns offer good examples related to the effects of increased fundraising and the emergence of resource-poor candidates in Mississippi politics.

The politician population was defined as the incumbents and challengers participating in the 1982 and 1986 U. S. House of Representatives primary election in the state of Mississippi. Independent candidates (running in the general election) were also surveyed, as was one woman candidate involved in a statewide office, for a total of 17 completed interviews. This study contends that independent status also affects a candidate's access to campaign resources and the news media.

Five candidates were black and four were women. One woman candidate was black. Seven of the twenty-four candidates refused or were not available to participate in the survey. The

non-respondents were all resource-poor candidates. These candidates did not wage, aggressive, rigorous campaigns. Campaign organization and structure did not exist. During the primary period, these candidates refused to talk to reporters about campaign issues. Similarly, they refused to be interviewed for the project.

The interviews were conducted from July 1- September 30, 1987. Ten politician interviews were conducted in person. The remaining seven, including all incumbents were conducted by phone. The interviews ranged from 25 minutes to 90 minutes in length. A standard interview schedule was used for reporter and politician interviews.

To test hypothesis I and II, Kendall's Tau correlates were used to describe campaign resourcefulness, personal attributes and media connectedness relationships. The responses of journalists and politicians on the same items were cross-checked to estimate reliability. The rate of agreement on these items was .85.

**Results**

In 1982 and 1986, ten out of the 24 primary period contenders raised campaign funds in excess of $100,000; none were women and two were black. Even so, the candidate's campaigning philosophy may account for some of the differences in the candidate's approach to gaining media access. Table 1 suggests resource-rich candidates did not consider the amount of press coverage, establishing media relations, presenting issue

positions and a candidate's personality as important in conducting their campaigns as did financially-poor candidates and black candidates.

The data in Table 1 also suggest that resource-poor candidates, particularly racial minority candidates, place an emphasis on issue positions. One resource-poor candidate describes his attitudes about campaign fund-raising in the following way:

> As long as we stick to wanting to represent the average person and see that the tax dollar is spent for the benefit of the people paying those tax dollars, we aren't going to get the favorable news paper and television coverage... but you still have two-thirds of the dollar spent (on media advertising) in an image and favorable name recognition. I felt like the people I would want to contribute to the campaign couldn't afford to put that kind of money into something that didn't have any more potential to bring back benefits to them...

Minority candidates are likely to introduce fresh issues into the political debate and must rely on news coverage in some instances to elaborate on their ideas. This notion is contrasted to the open-ended responses of 90% of the resource-

**Table 1**

KENDALL'S TAU CORRELATIONS: POLITICIANS' CAMPAIGNING PHILOSOPHY, CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

| | Campaign Expenditures | Race | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| PHILOSOPHY: | | | |
| development of press contacts | -.29 * | -.07 | -.38 |
| press coverage | -.17 * | -.13 | -.18 |
| creating pseudo-events | -.32 * | -.13 | -.38 |
| issue positions | -.18 | -.32 | .00 |
| personality of the candidate | -.01 | -.31 | .28* |

*p<.05 All correlations are based on an N of 17

-Negative Kendall's Tau correlations on campaign expenditure and personal attribute variables suggest that resource-poor candidates consider the campaign philosophy more important than resourceful candidates.
Race-White=1 Black=0; Gender-Male=1 Female=0

rich candidates who perceived political advertising as a more effective campaigning strategy than news coverage. The demands of political advertising, as defined by resource-rich candidates, do not allow them to develop and communicate a broad range of issues. On candidate commented:

> We hit the ground running...and spend a lot of money. TV plays such a big role now. Back in the old days, you'd go to campaigns around the state and you'd have clubs who would sponsor a speaking. Folks would come to the speaking and you'd get a chance to meet two or three hundred people. Nowadays, they still have them, but they are not as well attended as they used to be. You have to use television (advertising) more. You're covering five hundred thousand people and you have to rely on a medium that will get you out there. We'll have to rely a lot more on that.

These results are notable in light of the compelling body of literature suggesting that political campaigns are oriented towards race and style at the expense of the issue oriented aspects of the political campaigns.

Also, the strength and direction of the coefficient on the race and "personality of the candidate" correlation suggest that black candidates and women candidates may perceive their personality as an important campaign factor. Blacks are rarely able to transcend the issue of race as a campaign issue and many women must overcome credibility problems early in their campaigns.

The findings in Table 2 suggest that resource-poor candidates do make a concerted effort to cultivate media sources. The correlations in Table 2 suggest that financially poor candidates, black candidates and women call press conferences more frequently than resource-rich candidates. Yet the press conferences

scheduled by these candidates appear to attract less media attention. The correlations are particularly striking for women (.60). Four of the women candidates called an average of five press conferences compared to a mean of three press conferences called by other candidates. Two women candidates reported that on two occasions, reporters did not attend their press conferences. One woman candidate attributed the situation to a lack of seriousness on the press' part: "The press in Mississippi have perceived women candidates as having so little impact... we could never get their attention."

These findings imply that regardless of the effort put into making formal contacts with the press through calls and press conferences, resource-poor organizations are unlikely to gain or sustain the attention of the press. Although resource-poor organizations do make an active effort to keep the press abreast of their campaign affairs, Table 2 suggests that resource-poor politicians are somewhat more likely to perceive news coverage of their campaigns as being based frequently on sources not associated with the campaign organizations than resource-rich politicians. These findings suggest that resource-poor campaigns are less able than resource-rich candidates to develop campaign strategy of functional value; strategies that have clear, visible and rewarding results.

**TABLE 2**

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES, FINANCIAL ADVANTAGE AND MEDIA CONNECTEDNESS

| | Campaign Expenditures | Race | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Calls to media | .14 | -.41** | .28* |
| 2. No. of press conferences called | -.13 | -.09 | -.49** |
| 3. No. of reporters attending press conferences | -.13 | - .12 | -.60*** |
| 4. Coverage based on material provided by the campaign | .23 | .24 | -.07 |
| 5. News sources not associated with campaign | -.28* | -.08 | -.12 |
| 6. Strategy for contacting media on regular basis | -.17 | .09 | .45 |
| 7. No. press calls to campaign | .08 | .10 | .10 |

p<05*
p<01**
p<001***
All correlations are based on an N of 17

Race: White=1 Black=0  Gender: Male=1, Female=0

Table 3 suggests that big spenders are less likely to be party recruits during the primary period, however they are able to a establish strong party organization. These findings concur with researchers who contend political parties are weakening as a result of new political communication technology and candidate fund-raising.[26]

**Table 3**

KENDALL'S TAU CORRELATIONS: PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES FINANCIAL ADVANTAGE, AND CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION

| | Campaign Expenditures | Race | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| Party recruitment | -.29* | .12 | .07 |
| Full time staff size | .33 ** | -.15 | -.04 |
| Part time staff size | .38 ** | .22 | .04 |
| Opinion Polling | .38 ** | .21 | .12 |

P<05*
p<01**
All correlations are based on an N of 17

The positive Kendall's Tau correlation indicates the greater the financial advantage the more usage of the method.
Race-White=1 Black=0; Gender-Male=1 Female=0

## DISCUSSION

Agenda-building theory provides an important perspective on mass media influences in election campaigning. The mass media's role in building an election agenda and the consequences of this process prove important for understanding the electoral process, the opportunities for different types of candidates, and the role of news organizations in contemporary America.

Consistent with Hypothesis I, personal attributes are predictors of a candidate's access to resources. All women were resource-poor candidates and three of the five black candidates waged resource-poor campaigns. These conclusions are not consistent with Goldenberg's.[37] She found resource-poor groups do not know how to use the news media effectively as a campaign resource. On the basis of the patterns seen in the Mississippi campaigns, I would conclude that resource-poor candidates are in fact sophisticated and prudent about their use of the news media. But, resource-poor candidates perceive news organizations to be unresponsive no matter how aggressively they pursue media coverage.

On the basis of the correlations between campaign resource, personal attributes and media connectedness, Hypothesis II is supported. The level of media connectedness, especially in the case of women, interact with financial resourcefulness to hinder successful agenda-building for resource-poor candidates. The subtleties of media connectedness are difficult to measure. However, the high rate of agreement between reporters and

politicians on the same connectedness variables strengthens support of this hypothesis.

Exploiting the communication environment has become critical to any successful campaign. Candidates have to get their names known and their issues understood in order for voters to evaluate them. News coverage stimulates interest in elections. Candidate assessments and the eventual choices made by the voters often depend on the quality and quantity of information available to voters from media outlets.

This study is an exploratory one. In an effort to examine the relationships between politicians and news sources, politicians perceptions alone are insufficient. However, the role politicians play in the agenda-building process is significant. Moreover, the results of this study suggest that resource-rich candidates may dominate the agenda-building process in news coverage.

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